

**LCA Public Comments**  
**June 2, 2003 – New Orleans**  
General Session

1. (Capt. Dee Gohagan) MRGO – Why are you still studying MRGO? Why haven't you closed it? Why have you not determined it is killing the marsh? This meeting is a done deal – just a way to justify putting fresh water into our lake that will kill it.

Response: MRGO is authorized federal project – serves the nation on economic basis. Although negative environmental consequences we have a process we have to go through.

This study process starts with the Coast 2050 state plan – approved by 20 parishes. The diversions into the Pontchartrain are small and match the needs of the Lake. Lower basin diversion are large in order to match the needs in those areas. We will not fill in these lakes, we will test the impacts of alternatives on environment. If affects are unacceptable, then we won't do it. – re: small diversions – we are not trying to dilute input, this is more efficient.

2. (Doug Daigle) Decisions need to be made and these should not be made by agencies alone. For example – MRGO needs to be reviewed by a broader group to see if this is a crisis. Maybe this should be moved or rather than wait for others to make us deal with these issues. Same with regulatory issues. You should consider the whole Mississippi River watershed. Someone to prioritize the alternatives- not agencies, just state and public do it. It will be vry impoportant how regulate consistency between permits and LCA

Response: We are looking at regulatory issues and consistency issues. Once we have a plan in place, we can see if everything is consistent with this plan. We have to establish priorities within priorities – agency, funding, etc. The public can be involved by being here tonight and telling us where their priorities are.

3. (Bob Sabotier) Why is geology not being considered in plan formulation? For example, subsidence did not begin 35 years ago. It should be considered. There are structures as deep as 20,000 feet that influence what happens at the surface – for example, faults, salt domes, etc.

Response: We do look at deep soil conditions. We have contracted in order to look at faulting. Although geology is not being considered now, it will be incorporated before we invest money in these projects. Specific site work will come during detailed design. Also, one evaluation framework does allow for adapting to new knowledge including geology.

4. (Benny Rousselle) How long will this take?

Response: Some components will take a long time – some won't. For example, changes in diversion operations and dredge material projects could be fairly quick, larger scale

diversions could take much longer. We may ask for delegated authority in order to implement more quickly.

5. (Cherter Parronin) We don't have a viable project for restoring the marsh. Only resource we have is the Mississippi River. But we do have small things to do – will you include in a “new project” recommendation for addressing major problems to Houma and New Orleans? You can't quantify benefits. We have a whole series of suspect assumptions in this plan – so can we adopt projects for protecting our infrastructure.

Response: This is an ecosystem restoration project. We will discuss impacts of not doing this project on infrastructure. We will not like be recommending no action.

6. (Randy Moertel) MRGO – ongoing study, EDA says study will not be finished until November of this year. SubProvince 4 will be recommending salinity barriers, but without feasibility studies (as in MRGO case). Therefore, discuss MRGO just like other strategies. Otherwise, public has no opportunity to comment. How can we get MRGO to be addressed in the LCA study? Why have locks in Subprovince 4 and not look at lock on MRGO?

Response: Just by incorporating recommendations from MRGO study by amendment later.

7. (Carlton Dufrecheau) If you want public support in SubProvince 1, then you have to include MRGO – can't wait for results of an ongoing study.

Response: We have to abide by project. But we can make provisions to include recommendations form this study. In fact, the ongoing study puts this issue in advance of others.

8. MRGO study was to take 1 year, I have been attending meetings for 4 years.

9. St. Bernard has no-one on Governor's Commission, LaFourche has 4 or 5. We want to have MRGO on the table and discuss the problem and possible solutions.

Response: Can't recommend closure at this point in the process. We have to demonstrate clearly to nation the advisability of closure

10. (William Randolph) Not only should plan suggest closure, but it should also address restitution for damages.

11. Doing one thing in west – Calcasieu and Sabine – need to do the same thing in the east, MRGO

12. (Cheryl Kelly) Looks like everything we are doing is from inside – out. Shouldn't we do it more from the outside in? We have many diversions etc., but shouldn't we protect shorelines while these other projects are getting underway?

Response: Diversions will provide the solutions to our major problems. Chandeleurs Islands not as critical of an issue. Our approach, though, is flexible enough to address that issue as well.

13. (Capt. Danny Bordelon) City of New Orleans should be suing the federal government to close MRGO. Each ship costs \$20,000 to keep it open. Study includes such things as dabbling ducks, which are dependent on north winds, how can you base a study on things like ducks and wildlife?

Response: Number of variables that influence these resources.

14. These studies are backwards – MRGO should be closed, that's obvious. The studies do not really address the real issues.

Response: We try to estimate whether environment is suitable for a given species—not necessarily how many there will be. We compare various alternatives on this basis in order to compare likely benefits of various plans.

15. (Jan Brock) Stakeholder meetings – who will be invited?

Response: This is evolving. Mark Davis is involved. We have identified a number of groups and we are now contacting them.

16. You said there would be streamlining procedures to expedite this process. Does this include deauthorizing projects?

Response: Yes.

17. (Vick Mario) Optimizing hurricane protection design and consistency were mentioned. Are you looking at Donaldson to the Gulf and Morganza to the Gulf to be sure they are consistent with the plan?

Response: Yes. These hurricane protection projects are being looked at. Also, looking at no action in terms of effects on hurricane impacts.

18. (Capt. Dee Cohagan) I've fished Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Borgne and Biloxi Marsh. When MRGO was dredged, markers were placed well within land. Now, these markers are out in the water 300-400 feet. Proctors point also had a marker on land that is now 300 yards out in the water. MRGO has been absolute disaster. It has affected safety of the entire area – Venetian Isles, New Orleans, etc. When Biloxi marshes go, nothing left to protect New Orleans.

Response: Yes, these are problems.

19. (Robert Tannenbaum) Some parts of the coastal system will not be considered due to constraints of the process. Subsystems, such as MRGO, need to be incorporated along

with the others to keep results within same coast-wide context as other measures being considered. Consider it as part of the system analysis

20. (Ramona Angelo) At several recent meetings, stakeholders listed: environmentalists, landowners, DA, etc. there were about 9. Once you identified stakeholders how will you decide who to contact?

Response: No one group has more weight than any other.

21. Why is there no representative from St. Bernard parish on Governor's Commission?

Response: Legislation defined groups. Attempts were made to include various stakeholders, without regard to geography.

22. (Lester Ralph) I recently purchased Rigolets Marina in St. Tammany. Where are you putting the regrowth of the land?

Response: Difficult to answer. We started with target of land-loss level. Targets led to projects selection and location.

23. We need to use dredged material to maintain barrier in lands and not over-freshen Lake Pontchartrain. Are you looking at economic impacts of diversions?

Response: Yes.

24. My species of concern are: Brown shrimp, white shrimp, and speckled trout.

25. (Junior Rodriguez) By 2004 – Authorization and funding are from Congress. Why can't congress give authorization and funding for MRGO now? I hear so much about reductions, how in 2004 do you expect funding?

Response: Yes, this year has funding difficulties, not likely to continue indefinitely.

26. Harbor Man Tax – not available since 1998. This could fund some strategies, but no longer available.

In 2050 planning process, we had a lot of public involvement. Why did we get involved – to get shafted again?

MRGO is our main issue. Bank stabilization is also an issue, but I don't see that as a part of this plan. I was a member of coastal commission in 1978. We had big ideas then. Not much done since then. MRGO and other big issues always need more studies. If Dr. Ryan can continue to make economic sense, he will be doing miracles. MRGO used to have 34-36 ships/month. Now 24 ships per month. After Hurricane Georges, cost went up to \$200,000 per ship. If COE, Port and Chamber can justify keeping MRGO open – why can't we justify closing it? If Federal government does get money to implement this study – where will state get its share to match? Is there an initiative to get this money? Do you know who comes out ahead due to coastal erosion? As land is lost, property

taxes continue, while state leases the area for oil and gas and oysters. State of Florida puts in 50%, but we don't have that kind of money. We need to get Governor interested in this part of the state.

### **BREAKOUT SESSION: SUBPROVINCE 1**

1. How are they going to pick Alternatives and do they already have one in mind?
2. Have the oysters issues been addressed?
3. Who is developing the benefits and costs?
4. Are their costs assigned to each alternative?
5. Why aren't the Chandeleur Islands included in these plans?
6. How quickly will these measures get implemented once a plan is chosen?
7. How quickly will we see results once a plan is chosen?
8. In SubProvince 1 diversions are a good idea, but the plan should incorporate more shoreline protection, but not rock maybe oyster shell.
9. What is the regulatory process component for the LCA? (From Harv Stein, Sierra Club)
- 9a. In terms of consistency how is the permitting, regulatory process going to be balanced with permitting?
- 9b. How will on-site impacts from day to day permits be minimized in the LCA regulatory program?
10. When will the finalized document come out for public review?
11. What will the prioritization process of decommissioning non-essential navigable waterways be?
12. Will there be adaptive management in the LCA?
13. Must consider pollution when dealing with dredged material.
14. Why are there no projects/alternatives in Lake Borgne/Biloxi marsh area?

### **BREAKOUT SESSION: SUBPROVINCE 1 (SMALL GROUP 1)**

1. Junior Rodriguez –
  - If can't control MRGO then wasting time.
  - Why didn't I see anything of bank stabilization?
  - CWPPRA out of money – what if good project don't make it?
2. Person from Mississippi State University
  - Questions about amount of Bonnet Carre diversion to East & West
  - Maintain what we have
  - Look at existing historical research of what is subsiding and why
    - Tyrone Foreman (866-0360) values of Labranche 1970-1972
    - Hinchey productivity of Labranche for Lake Ponchartrain Basin
    - Glen Montz – invasion of the cypress into the marsh; 1892 crevasse; land sinking is newer land
    - Newest sediment is subsiding
3. Chris Andry, St. Bernard –
  - Look at Chandeleur Islands or other barrier islands in Breton Sound and subprovince 1, especially those close to channel
4. Ralph Latapie, St. Bernard Coastal Advisory Committee and a retired marine biologist and coastal scientist

- Deal with vandalism on the gated structures at Bayou Lamoque
  - Leave Bayou Lamoque open for some exchange of fresh water
  - Bayou Lamoque works when open so we should use the structures that we have
- Using existing structures will be faster and cost less

## **BREAKOUT SESSION: SUBPROVINCE 2**

1. How compatible are hurricane protection plans with major diversions as planned?
2. Naomi or West Point a La hache are small siphons in Barataria. Why don't we hear about the controversies and lawsuits like we see at Caernarvon?
3. Are there limits to the amount of nutrients a wetland can handle?
4. How would barrier islands be restored?
5. Why are there no shoreline stabilization projects in the alternatives presented in SubProvince 2?
6. If you went with maximum water and sediment and you looked at maximum form Subprovinces 1 and 3—Would there be enough water available?
7. Do all of these plans involve introducing new sand into islands? All from ship shoal?
8. Have you looked at potential contaminants in available dredged material for marsh creation projects?
9. Nitrogen removal must be a priority in order to get buy in from up-stream agriculture.
10. Pipeline canal plugs are not being maintained. Is there no legal requirement to keep up with these? These sorts of problems cause a lot of marsh loss.
11. Has any thought been given to breaking up the fetch in the southern bays of Barataria that are ever enlarging?
12. If you just take 45% of the water from the Mississippi River, how much sediment can be captured relative to the amount lost through Southwest Pass?
13. Can Donaldsonville to Gulf be added to this plan like Morganza to the Gulf is?
14. Will all Alternatives be presented in the plan that goes for WRDA 04 authorization?  
ANS: We will select a plan that includes components across the coast.
15. When will the plan be selected? ANS: Next 2-3 weeks
16. Will state continue to allow pipelines, draglines, etc. to be cut through the land  
ANS: We are looking at consistency
17. Morganza to the Gulf and other projects appear like Seawall approach. Is that consistent to restoration of coast.  
ANS: If have a leaking levee will help let water move in but keep salt water out: looking at making the area healthier.
18. Small Siphons (Naomi, W. Point a La Hatch) are they running?  
ANS: Yes, by the parish
19. Why don't we hear of problems for small siphons like you do with Davis Pond?  
ANS: Because its at the local level. You hear less but they are being sued too.
20. Can you tell on Internet if two small siphons are running (Naomi, W. Pt. a la Hatch)?  
ANS: Not in real time, like Davis Pond, but we have records
21. Have we studied how much nutrients are needed in the wetlands?  
ANS: Yes, we have modeled and the marsh can handle more than the Miss. has.
22. What are you talking about with Rest. Barrier rock or sand? Why not use rock?  
Weeks marine - the beach builder - how did that work?  
ANS: well, but it was expensive

23. Rocks at Empire on east side is building land, on west is lost. Rocks contribute to loss on west.
24. Maintaining barrier Islands you use diverse solutions and there is no one set answer to apply to all Islands. It's an ongoing distribution system.
25. Why not open Empire and Ostrica locks?
26. West bay will be a creative use of sediment from river, keeping the sediment from going off continental shelf.
27. Most important is to save marsh that exists. In the 9 alternatives in this subprovince there is no shoreline protection to preserve existing land.
28. If go with a plan that uses the maximum Freshwater and sediment from the river in all SP is there enough river to cover it?
29. Are there costs associated with these plans? E3 looks expensive.
30. What is sediment delivery via pipeline?
31. Have we looked at contamination?
32. If start rebuilding island is it thought that we would see literal drift again?
33. There isn't much maintenance of existing interior canals and pipeline dams at bulkheads. Oil companies aren't taking care of their stuff.
34. You can still see effects of marsh buggy tracts from 15 years ago. Knowing that why are they still allowed to continue work today?
35. Any thought given to Barataria Bay. Its grown but used to have interior islands break it up.
36. Water budget - how much of water budget is E3 vs R1?
37. Did we look at pulsing in projects/modeling?
38. If we take 45% of the Mississippi River water, what amount of sediment is available?
39. How much sediment can we capture before it is lost off Southwest Pass?
40. Is Third Delta a good idea?
41. Is one idea of plan that river historically was attached to Lake Pontchartrain and we want to reestablish that connection?
42. Big part of plan is monitoring and adaptive management
43. Davis pond is not opened mostly.

